

THE CHESTY PULLER PARAGON: LEADERSHIP DOGMA OR MODEL DOCTRINE

**A MONOGRAPH
BY
Major Mickey L. Quintrall
United States Air Force**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff
College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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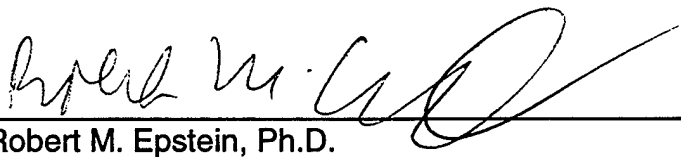
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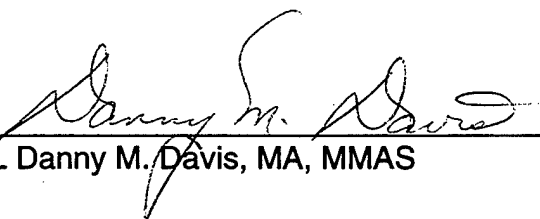
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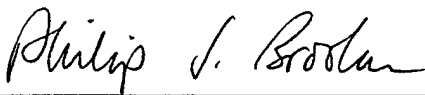
Approved by:



Robert M. Epstein, Ph.D. Monograph Director



COL Danny M. Davis, MA, MMAS Director, School of Advanced
Military Studies



Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D. Director, Graduate Degree
Program

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ABSTRACT

THE CHESTY PULLER PARAGON: LEADERSHIP DOGMA OR MODEL DOCTRINE,
By Mickey L. Quintrall, USAF, 43 pages.

In this study, I examine whether or not the United States Marine Corps senior warrior-leaders should continue to use heroic-warriors from the 1942-52 era as contemporary paragons of tactical leadership. Additionally, I compare the Marine tactical leadership models between 1942-52, and their relevance within the cultivated and refocused leadership doctrine of today's Marine Corps. Then, I examine whether or not there is a gap created using an earlier era's tactical leadership example to model contemporary tactical battlefield leadership.

The Marine Corps tactical leadership criteria and what the Corps expected of its commanders during World War II and the Korean War is the starting point. There was not much written leadership guidance then, but there was accepted leadership doctrine, nonetheless. Today, several United States Marines are recognized as setting the contemporary paragon for the ideal tactical battlefield leader. Among them, is World War II and Korean War Marine Lewis "Chesty" Burwell Puller. Chesty Puller not only set a courageous combat example, he trained his men hard, respected his men's fearlessness, and worked hard to build unit comradeship.

Service parochialism and cultural turmoil through the Vietnam War set the stage for a rocky period in the history of the Corps, leading up to the Commandant's re-focus on a new Marine followership-leadership ethos. The Marine Corps' recent efforts to "Transform" their Marines into a new breed is an attempt to transform leadership dogma to leadership-followership doctrine. His fresh approach is thought to better inculcate the Marine culture with loyalty and commitment to the Corps, similar to what was experienced within World War II Marine Corps.

The thrust of the monograph pursues the question: Does Chesty Puller provide the right contemporary leadership example, or does he perpetuate dogma?

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I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

*When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the ones which open for us.*¹

– Alexander Graham Bell

Referred to as “The Invincible,” by both his men and his enemies, Alexander the Great had what Carl von Clausewitz called the “inward eye” or *coup d’oeil*. His courage on the battlefield, fighting and commanding along-side his men, fired their imagination and awoke in them the mystical faith that led them to accept, without question, that there was nothing he would not dare; nothing he could not do in the pursuit of victory.² The warrior-leadership he displayed worked for the battles during his era. Similarly, historians write that Caesar, Napoleon and other Great Captains led armies with personal versions of an “inward eye.” Their warrior-leadership was shown to produce superior armies that dominated the battlefields of their time. Time, however, has also proven that their elite warrior-leadership has not kept pace with the technological and doctrinal changes of the evolving battlefield.

The personality and the character of the tactical commander has always played a key role on the battlefield. Whereas emperors, kings, and commanders-in-chief once led men into battle, the warrior ethos and warrior-leadership continues to change. During the American Civil War generals continued to lead the tactical battle from the front, but the commander-in-chief led and managed the operational battle from the rear. Some say it was a lack of courage, history however suggests that their position, short of the kill line, better served the force. John Keegan, in his book, *Mask of Command*, weighed General Ulysses S. Grant’s battlefield leadership during the American Civil War. Keegan’s study

determined that the General Grant often “refused to lead by example” onto the tactical battlefield and would rather command from behind “musket range.”³ Nonetheless, history rightfully paints Grant as one the great military strategic and operational leaders. Grant’s *Personal Memoirs* certainly provide a clear discussion of war-time leadership amid chaos, confusion, and ravage of battle. Indeed, for the Civil War, Grant’s idea of tactical warrior-leadership made sense. The ilk of a tactical battlefield commander, however, continues to change with time.

Militaries have searched for the character of a warrior-leader for at least two thousand five-hundred years. Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Antoine Jomini are just a few of the men who defined what it takes to be a warrior-model. Today, US Army doctrine alludes to this warrior-spirit as the knack of forging victory out of the chaos of battle; to overcome fear, hunger, deprivation, and fatigue.⁴ This is one service’s definition. However, do today’s services adequately consider the increasing complexity of the battlefield in their leadership doctrine?

Leadership must adapt to the character of the battlefield to be effective. Likewise, the science or doctrine of combat leadership will require adaptation to meet contemporary and future battlefields. Frederick The Great and Napoleon Bonaparte’s defeats are just two examples of tactics and leadership styles that worked in their time, but not in the twentieth century.

This monograph intends to examine whether or not the United States Marine Corps senior warrior-leaders should continue to use heroic-warriors from the 1942-52 era as contemporary paragons of tactical leadership. Although Marine Corps tradition cannot brush aside their legends of warrior-leadership and stories of battlefield victories, when is it

right to establish new contemporary leadership models. Moreover, what role should former heroic-leaders hold in the Marine Corps annals?

The Marine Corps battlefield leadership of the forties and early fifties was different than what is required today of the Marines' self acclaimed "911" mission. The leadership doctrine and training of a tactical commander from both eras are similar in only the most axiomatic Marine traditions and customs. Training and fighting in each time period reveals drastic differences. Not only was written Marine Corps leadership doctrine prior to World War II fundamentally non-existent,⁵ except for the basic training prospective Marines received in Officer Candidate School or Boot-camp, leadership skills were learned from senior Marines; handed down from Marine-to-Marine. It had been that way, to some extent, from the Corps' beginning in 1775.

The command pinnacle of the Corps, the Commandant of Marines published the first World War II leadership manual, *Battle Doctrine For Front Line Marines*.⁶ Before 1944 doctrinal manual was printed there was no written guidance Marine tactical battlefield commanders could refer to, except for memorandums from former commandants. Rather, the Marine Corps' idea of warrior-leadership seemed to stem from a blend of innate ability, acquired wisdom, and the emulation of successful warrior-leaders, past and present.

Several United States Marines are recognized as setting the contemporary paragon for the ideal tactical battlefield leader. Among them, and perhaps the most renown is World War II and Korean War Marine legend Lewis "Chesty" Burwell Puller. Sergeant-major tough, Chesty Puller not only set a courageous combat example, he trained his men hard, respected his men's fearlessness, and worked hard to build unit comradeship. Moreover, Puller demanded his officers and non-commissioned officers do

the same. Something rare even today, he also stood his ground with his superiors on issues he felt strongly about. If he had something to say, damn the rank or consequences, he said what he thought. This probably contributed to the fact that it took him thirty years in the Marine Corps before he became a brigadier general.⁷

During the period of 1942-52 Lewis Puller, as a warrior-leader, was thought of as the epitome of Marine tactical battlefield leadership. Many articles and veterans of that era claim that his story illustrates a rare respect among Marines for one man. Historical accounts indicate Puller's "inward eye" revealed a special understanding of his men, team-building, setting a courageous example, and treating his troops with respect, sprinkled with the right measure of discipline. The unit cohesion Puller created, and his commanding presence on the battlefield was described by his superiors as incredible.⁸ Anthony Kellett, referencing his book, *Combat Motivation*, would say that a large part of Puller's success may have been his ability to motivate his troops to mentally prepare for the throes of combat.⁹

Relatively new, untested, amphibious warfare doctrine in the World War II Pacific, demanded an autonomous battlefield commander that exhibited a special "cut." Rushing ashore on a hostile beach, using frontal-attack tactics, with regiments line abreast, without the possibility of retreat, was a bloody way to wage a ground war. Orchestrating the beach attack with contemporary naval and air technologies made the operation that much more complex. Without written leadership doctrine, the Marine Corps during World War II relied on commanders with innate ability and acquired battlefield wisdom. Successfully, the Marines on the Pacific beaches and battlefields

maintained Corps-bred tactical commanders that exhibited tough, selfless mettle during the fray, while exhibiting a driving, but gentle character before and after the battle.

It is questionable if the 1944 Marine doctrine had much to do with Chesty Puller's leadership style. His training and wisdom had been reared in the "Old Corps."¹⁰ Indeed, at the beginning of World War II, Puller already had twenty-three years in the Corps, and had earned three of his five *Navy Crosses*. In training or in battle, his style was to lead from the front, driving his Marines forward until the objectives were accomplished. While preparing his men for battle, there are many examples of pushing his troops to the point of exhaustion, and punishing those Marines that fell out. He knew that hitting those exposed merciless Pacific beaches would require commitment, courage, and being; tough or die!

Battlefield casualties during the Pacific campaign of World War II were heavy. Tragically, during the beach assault and battles on Peleliu Island in September 1944, the three battalions of Colonel Puller's First Marine Regiment lost fifty-six percent of their strength. Did the losses reflect Chesty Puller's leadership style, or were they the result of the era's Marine ethos? After all, of the eight *Medals of Honor* earned by Marines on Peleliu, six were awarded to men who covered grenades with their bodies to save their comrades.¹¹ Or, was the causality rate an acceptable risk associated with the Marine Corps increasingly complex land-air-sea mission? Regardless of the evidence, Puller's successes as a warrior-leader on the Pacific battlefields of World War II and Korea are cherished by Marines, and contribute greatly to the unique story of the Marine Corps tradition of *esprit de corps*.

Marine Corps literature asserts that being a Marine means becoming a part of a matured ethos comprised of heroic leadership examples of moral and physical courage, honor, commitment, and battlefield wisdom.¹² Clearly, solid leadership and fighting spirit have always been the Marine Corps' bedrock. Today, the Commandant, General Charles C. Krulak, has seen fit to charge the United States Marine Corps with developing leadership doctrine, teaching leadership principles and traits, and watching for the spark that could indicate military genius. To help perpetuate this ethos, Marine Corps framers have always contended that it takes past heroic-warriors and leaders to provide examples for following generations of Marines to emulate. Since the Vietnam War, however, the Marine Corps has evolved into a smaller techno-corps, comprised of "Nintendo-Marine" warriors, and operating more jointly, on mainly fields-of- peace, rather than war. The maturing of the Marine Corps has provided a significant warrior-leader challenge.

Much has happened in the last fifty-five years of Marine evolution. Today, Marine commanders lead and manage a vastly more complex and lethal force of Marines. The Marine Corps mission now is outlined in both service and Joint leadership doctrine, and supplemented yearly with guidance by their Commandant. Additionally, a more educated Marine Corps is recruited to deal with contemporary technology and evolving battlefield. Space operations, push button destruction, rapid world deployment, and instant communication require a different Marine culture. Efforts to keep pace with changes, however, have sometimes been painful. For Marines, establishing written doctrine to take the place of hand-me-down knowledge has been especially tough to swallow. The evidence lies partly in the Marine Corps' use of World War II and Korean War heroic-leaders as their tactical battlefield leadership models. Is it reasonable, to hold past leadership paragons as

examples of contemporary leadership doctrine? Or, do former warrior-heroes work to stifle the leadership paragon needed to reflect Marine doctrine and contemporary warrior-leadership?

The essence of this study lies in the comparison between the Marine tactical leadership models between 1942-52, and their relevance within the cultivated and refocused leadership doctrine of today's Marine Corps. Is there a gap created by using an earlier era's battlefield leadership example to model today's tactical battlefield leader?

The first part of the puzzle is defining the battlefield leadership criteria the Marine Corps expected of its commanders during World War II and the Korean War. There was not much written leadership guidance, but there was accepted leadership doctrine, nonetheless. Then, this study examines the Marine leadership model exemplified by Lewis "Chesty" Puller. Establishing the Marine Corps' 1942-52 battlefield leadership doctrine (written or not) provides a basis for evaluating whether or not Puller met the era's doctrinal model.

The next part of the puzzle is pieced together by viewing cultural evolution of the Corps after the Korean War. Indeed, service parochialism and cultural turmoil through the Vietnam War set the stage for, arguably, the most rocky period in the history of the Corps. Discipline and "esprit de corps" eroded, fueled by the war's unpopularity, weak service leadership, and the very different kind of war. Similarly, technology and the ways of war were drastically changing in policy, campaign doctrine, training, and rethinking their approach to the warrior/warrior-leader team, before they would be satisfied with the Corps' fighting ethos.

Clearly, the direction of today's Marine warrior-leadership appears to have adjusted its focus; to that of the follower-warrior. Marine leadership doctrine now leans more towards shaping its warriors through a "Transformation Process," that works on forming a shared leader-follower ethos. This fresh approach is expected to inculcate the entire Marine culture (officer and enlisted; senior and junior) with the loyalty and commitment to the Corps, similar to what was experienced within World War II Marine Corps, at the unit regimental level.

This new approach to Marine Corps leader-follower development, then, will establish the basis for a comparison between the "Chesty Puller (warrior-leadership Paragon" and the Marine Corps' battlefield leadership doctrine of 1997.

II. THE LEADERSHIP DOCTRINE OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS BETWEEN 1942 AND 1952

To think like a platoon over a few hundred yards is no great trick; to think like a division over a score of square miles is difficult, but the gene pool seems to cast up an adequate number of men who can manage it. To think like a corps is an unusual gift . . . and to think like an Army is a rarity (emphasis added).¹³

– Erik Larrabee

Certainly, it is naïve to think anyone has found the answer to the ageless mystique of what transforms a man into a warrior-leader. The same was true for the Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean War. Whether the Roman legions under Caesar, or a Marine regiment under Chesty Puller, in order to create a climate of *esprit de corps* and exhibit the necessary leadership, a commander has had to evince something special. Carl von Clausewitz alluded to this "something special" in his analysis of the Great Captains when he wrote about the innate flair for seeing through the "Fog of War" that enables a

commander to select the right course of action almost without thinking.¹⁴ For the Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean War, levels of Clausewitz' *coup d'oeil* is only one variable of the calculus leading to becoming a Marine warrior-leader.

Major General John A. Lejeune, Commandant of the Marine Corps between 1920-29, wrote that every Marine officer should "endeavor by all means in his power to establish himself to be a leader of men."¹⁵ Indeed, it has always been the Commandant that sets the standard for the Marine Corps. Commandant of Marines between 1948-52, and World War I hero, General C. B. Cates concluded that some of his Marines during both World Wars and the Korean War were born with *coup d'oeil* while others would need to dedicate many years of study and practice in order to reach similar levels.¹⁶ General Cates believed that most qualities of a potential leader came from a learned ability to direct and control, the acquired self-confidence based on expert initiative, loyalty, pride, knowledge, and displaying a sense of responsibility. Innate and learned abilities dealing with Marines on the battlefield were important, however, experience attained from a combat experience or the battle lessons of others, proved to be the "bread & butter" of the Marine Corps unwritten leadership doctrine.

A "wise man learns from his experience; a wiser man learns from the experience of others,"¹⁷ and until 1944 this was the basis of Marine Corps leadership doctrine. *The Marine Corps Officer's Guide* tells its Marines that leadership has always been a heritage which has been passed down from Marine to Marine since the founding of the Corps, over 222 years ago. Leadership has been mainly acquired by observation, experience and emulation.¹⁸ Moreover, Marine Corps battlefields have always been the laboratory of

doctrine. Indeed, without the test of battle there is always the chance of spinning a web of doctrinal nonsense that is based on peace.

A Great Captain once remarked that "war is not a affair of chance, rather, a great deal of knowledge, study, and meditation is necessary to conduct war well."¹⁹ His comment hints at what the Marine Corps has always expected of their commanders. In order to gain wisdom through the experience of others, the Marine Corps has expected their officers to read and study military history and theory. Napoleon once made the recommendation to his staff that they should read and re-read the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, and Frederick, and to hold them as models. He believed that this was "the only way to become a great general and to master the secrets of the art of war."²⁰ Seeking military wisdom from heroic-leaders, though, comes with some advise. Emulating past warriors, John Keegan's warns in his book, *The Face of Battle*, by studying history which frequently focuses on generals and generalship, too often "dissolves into sycophancy or hero-worship."²¹ Marine Corps history during twentieth century certainly provides a rich environment for hero-worship.

History is full of accounts where military leaders gained leadership insight and wisdom through reading military history, and studying the military classics. Men reared in the Marine "Old Corps" were no different. Chesty Puller kept in his pocket a jungle-stained copy of Caesar's *Gaelic Wars* for more than twenty years; a book that deals almost entirely with warrior-leadership and how his personal decisions influenced both friendly and enemy forces.²² According to his biography, from his teens "he had been impressed by Caesar's common-sense admonitions."²³ Similarly, he read the stories of Alexander the Great and studied the tactics manuals of Frederick the Great, and

maintained a personal copy of Henderson's *Stonewall Jackson* with him until after the war in Korea.²⁴ Dirty and worn on every page, with much of the text underlined and notes in all of the margins, he studied it almost daily. The firm resolve of Stonewall Jackson, "Never take counsel of your fears," was written on every page. For the Marine Corps, though, times were changing. It was going to take more than the few "Old Corps" Marines' leadership style to command the battlefields of World War II and the Korean War.

Between 1940-45 the Marine Corps grew at an incredible rate. In 1941, the Marine Corps boot-camp (Parris Island, South Carolina) monthly average number of trainees jumped from 190 to 1,600.²⁵ From a pre-Pearl Harbor one-week high of 552, the weekly enlistment ran as high as 6,000. Similarly, the Marine officer corps grew jammed with converted reservists and new lieutenants in an effort to meet the leadership demand. Most of the new Marine officers came from enlisted men with some college, men with some prior service or military training; anything to acquire the war requirement of officers (the 1942 Selective service move was only used to recruit enlisted members).

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>
1940	26,389	1,556
1943	287,621	21,938
1945	447,389	37,664 ²⁶

The new generation of Marines suffered from untested leadership ability and immature battle wisdom, and would have to "learn under fire."²⁷ Ability and wisdom may have been adequate for the Great Captains, but for the maturing battlefields of the twentieth century the Marine Corps had very little. The amphibious assault doctrine, outlined in the 1939 *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* was complex and

unforgiving. It called for coordinated aviation and naval fires to precede a naval landing craft flopping thousands of Marines ashore. This frontal attack style beach landing moved forward, with regiments of Marines abreast, with no line of retreat. The Marine Corps made its most important contribution to their maneuver doctrine during those frustrating days when far-sighted Commandants, Marine doctrine planners, and small Fleet Marine Force units pieced together the essential concepts for a successful amphibious assault.²⁸

Increased dispersion leading up to the World War II battlefields, the challenge of the unseasoned Marine amphibious role, and advanced man-killing technology created issues that begged for standard tactical leadership criteria and supporting doctrine, (standard "play & rule book"). There were a few men that commanded men in World War I or the Banana Wars of Nicaragua and Haiti, but it had been 15-20 years gone by. In the Marine Corps, this equated to the strategic and operational battlefields being commanded by a few "Old Corps" Marines brought-up during a relatively inactive period, and a newborn beach landing doctrine. On the tactical battlefield, the Marine warriors were lucky if they had an officer or two with any experience at all.

In 1921, the Marine Commandant, General John A. Lejeune had provided his Corps of Marines with fourteen leadership qualities: industry - energy - initiative - determination - enthusiasm - firmness - kindness - justness - self-control- unselfishness - honor - and courage, but this list was rarely read and non-binding. Leading into World War II, the incredible inrush of Marines did not allow time to develop battlefield (or any) wisdom, nor an adequate search for leadership ability. The gap remained, however, until

1944. General Alexander A. Vandergrift, another Marine Corps Commandant, took the first substantial step to document how the Marine battlefield would be commanded.

Commandant Vandergrift, directed the development of the first Marine tactical battlefield leadership “play & rule book,” *Battle Doctrine For Front Line Leaders*. The *Vandergrift Doctrine*’s “Forward” recommends to its readers that it “is worthy of careful study by every Marine who is or may be charged with the leadership of other Marines in battle.”²⁹ Yet, the significance of that pamphlet obviously goes well beyond those opening remarks. For the first time, the Marine Corps provided to its officers written battle command guidance for its Marine tactical battlefield commanders. Though uncultivated doctrine, this booklet provided structure which complemented the leadership abilities of the leader, and gave all Marines a common dose of wisdom. However, doctrine, written or otherwise, has always meant to only “educate the mind of the future commander, to guide him in his self education, not to accompany him to the battlefield.”³⁰ The unit comradeship going into battle and the mettle displayed in combat demonstrates the true worth of ones knowledge of doctrine.

The two capstone issues in the *Vandergrift Doctrine* are “esprit de corps” and “discipline.” Considered the prime factor in a successful fighting unit, the manual reads that esprit de corps .” . . needs no further explanation.” According to the manual esprit de corps simply meant that no “Marine ever lets another Marine down.” [Balderdash!] According to Webster’s dictionary, however, “esprit de corps. . . . denote[s] the common spirit pervading the members of a body or association of persons; implies sympathy, enthusiasm, devotion, and jealous regard for the honor of the body as a whole” (emphasis

added).³¹ Clearly, the term meant much more than the fuzzy definition provided by the doctrinal leadership booklet.

The 1944 pamphlet regarded “discipline” as the second key to leading a fighting unit. Discipline was defined as the difference between a “mob” and a unit.” Moreover, justice, consistency, firmness, and respect were considered roots of Marine “discipline.” Again, Webster provides a clearer meaning by noting that discipline is the treatment suited to a disciple or learner; development of ones faculties by instruction and exercise; training, whether physical, mental, or moral in accordance with established rules. .(emphasis added)”³²

John Keegan helps to describe the Marine Corps’ “esprit de corps” and “discipline” using the leadership styles of Alexander, Wellington, Grant, and Hitler.³³ Similar to what the World War II Marine Commandant meant by “esprit de corps” and “discipline,” Keegan concluded that successful leadership involves five imperatives: kinship, prescription, sanction, action, and example. Kinship is the bond of respect between the commander and the soldier. Prescription (e.g., communicating) strengthens kinship by conveying the commander’s intent to soldiers. Sanction is the enforcement of the commander’s standards through effective use of rewards and punishment (and the threat thereof). Action means selecting and performing the correct function for each situation. Finally, Keegan’s greatest imperative of command is to lead by personal example, share hardships, and assume prudent risks with the brother-soldier. “Esprit de Corps” and “Discipline” for the Marine Corps were considered the bedrock of leadership success, and it was during the same period the other services began developing their leadership doctrine.

As the Korean War exploded in June of 1950, the US Department of Defense had just finished publishing another first: *The Armed Forces Officer*. The booklet provided the Marine Corps another great source of doctrinal thinking about officership. It provide general information and leadership guidance for American officers of all branches. This comprehensive, 263-page booklet provided guidance on leading troops as an officer, and ended with twenty-nine propositions relating to commanding men in combat.³⁴ Unlike the 1944 Marine leadership booklet, though, the *Armed Forces Officer* devoted entire chapters titled "Esprit," "Discipline," and "Mainsprings of leadership." Key to this doctrinal booklet though was the proposition that not every man can be taught to lead, though certainly leadership can be learned. *The Armed Forces Officer* further espouses that military leadership "certainly can be learned."³⁵ Professionals that read and study material relating to successful leadership principles and behavior, however, is not new.

Eric Larrabee's quote at the beginning of the section implies only a few men have the "unusual gift." If it is compared to the Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean War, this analogy is deceptive. Great warrior-leaders throughout history, whether commanding a corps or a platoon, leave various legacies of heroic courage, superb tactical application, and the unique abilities to command troops in battle. B.H. Liddell Hart once remarked that the practical value of history is to "throw the film of the past through the projector of the present onto the screen of the future."³⁶ His comment is valueless though, unless watched (or read) by those that will benefit from the lessons.

Marine warrior-leaders during World War II and during the Korean War rose through the ranks "seat of the pants" leadership, and were byproducts of innate or learned ability, guided by newly developed leadership doctrine. According to Marine Colonel

Samuel Griffith in his book, *The Battle for Guadalcanal*, World War II was a period dominated by mentoring "Old Breed" Marines. Their job, he wrote, was to impart "the unique spirit which they animated and the skills they possessed."³⁷ The term "Old Corps" however, did not set well with some veterans. Lieutenant General Lewis "Chesty" Puller shot back during an interview after the Korean War; "Old Corps! New Corps! There's not a damn bit of difference so long as it's the Marine Corps." Still, it is unlikely new leadership doctrine had much affect on the way they led troops. Analytically though, a question really jumps out. How did the "Old Corps" leadership weigh against the new leadership doctrine espoused by the 1944 *Vandergrift Doctrine* and the 1950 *Armed Forces Officer* leadership publications?

III. THE CHESTY PULLER LEADERSHIP PARAGON

*The reliability of a combat officer's orders being followed relates directly to only one thing: the trust [soldiers] have that the leader actually cares about them as people. If they're going to put their lives at risk, they need to know they're under the command of somebody who actually does care about their lives*³⁸

— Peter Senge

Twenty-five years after his death, "Old Corps" Chesty Puller is still considered the "Marine's Marine."³⁹ Maybe it was his battlefield presence and tenacity in combat, or the combination of these and a natural resolve for service before self, but it paid off. Like an army under Alexander, or a corps under Napoleon's *le brave des braves*⁴⁰ Marshal Michel Ney, Chesty's men knew they could always count on him to exhibit selfless courage, and to provide what ever preparation their unit would need, for what ever lay

ahead. In return, Puller gained their ultimate loyalty, commitment, and respect on every battlefield he commanded.

Analogous to the legacies the Great Captains left at the operational and strategic level, Chesty Puller's style of battlefield leadership continues to be an influential example of tactical combat leadership to all Marines. Unlike his contemporary counterparts, however, he did not have much written doctrine to follow. His "Old Corps" warrior-leadership was the result of innate and learned ability, and wisdom acquired through personal battlefield experience and studying the experiences of others.

Puller dropped out of the Virginia Military Institute in 1918 to enlist in the Marines, hoping to get to World War I before it passed him by. By the time he finished boot-camp, however, the war had ended. Earning a commission after only a year in the Corps and anxious for combat, he volunteered to fight in the Banana Wars of Haiti and Nicaragua, all in pursuit of a good battle.⁴¹ It was on these battlefields he learned actual hand-to-hand combat. After forty skirmishes, Puller claimed he learned to stand-up under the strain, and come to trust his physical prowess and ability to lead men under fire. As a captain, Puller commanded the "Horse Marines" in Peking, China, before taking center stage as a key commander during the Pacific campaigns of World War II and the Korean War. His warrior- wisdom, however, started many years before combat.

Puller's interest in military history began in his teens, and continued throughout his life.⁴² One of the early influences on Puller resulted from his study of the classic work by Maurice de Saxe. Marshal de Saxe discussed the human element in the battlefield leadership in his 1732 work, *My Reveries on the Art of War*. De Saxe noted that the "courage of the troops must be reborn daily, and that the true skill of a general

consisted in knowing how to guarantee it.”⁴³ Perhaps this classic writing, along with others, provided some influence for Puller’s ability to contain as well as control the actions of men in battle. How did the “Puller Paragon,” though, compare to the Corps’ new written leadership doctrine?

J.F.C. Fuller once commented that the one factor binds the Great Captains into a common brotherhood; it is their genius, and “because genius is indescribable, comparison is the sole means by which to explore its depths and measure its heights.”⁴⁴ Thus, the “Puller Paragon,” if it is one man’s snapshot of “genius,” has to be compared with doctrine.

Innate in character, remaining aloof from the men was not Puller’s personality. War hardened and tough, Puller empathized and respected the fearlessness and bravery of his Marines. In the *Vandergrift Doctrine*, caring for and respecting the troops is alluded to in at least five principles:

8th — *In the field, practice the habit of making daily inspections (using the “sample” method) and insist on: (1) clean weapons, (2) presence of arms, (3) care of the feet, (4) alertness while on watch. See that rewards and punishments are promptly awarded.*

9th — *At the front, visit all of your men frequently - talk to them - be sure they know what you want them to do at all times, and where you can be found.*

13th — *Never allow cruelty, it undermines the natural courage and manliness of the perpetrator. Be respectful to the dead - even the enemy dead. Bury the dead quickly.*

18th — *Always arrange for the comfort of your men before you do your own.*

20th — *Arrange continuously for your men to get as much rest as the situation will allow. Avoid unnecessary harassment, such as “standing by.” Unless your unit is on the move, or unless you or the enemy are actually attacking, you can usually arrange for at least two-thirds of your men to sleep at night.*

In similar terms the 1950 *Armed Forces Officer* booklet discusses the welfare and respect of the troops in two of the twenty-nine leadership propositions. Maybe because he had walked the shoes of an enlisted man, but Colonel Puller also demanded that his officers emulate his feelings. According to most historical accounts, before and after combat Puller made a point to remain as close to his men as possible in order to add glue to the unit's cohesion and remain a part of the fighting team.

Puller knew how important it was to look after his men's welfare. Moreover, he believed that his subordinate leaders shared in the responsibility of developing unit camaraderie through shared direction, *esprit* through a common purpose and confidence through building undeniable, unbeatable motivation.

The *Vandergrift Doctrine* substantiated most of Puller's "Old Corps" battlefield leadership style. Marine Corps policy during World War II stated that "Battles are won during the training period."⁴⁵ This was a sample of a leadership Puller modeled well. If his men needed extra work to prepare for a battle or a special mission, he was as hard as nails. While preparing his troops for Guadalcanal, Colonel Puller knew he had to push his troops to the limit:

*I want nobody to fall out today unless he falls unconscious. You're going to need every ounce of endurance you can build up when you're in combat. Anyone who staggers to the roadside, will be court-martialed or processed out as medically unfit.*⁴⁶

In addition to peacetime preparation, Puller had a war face as well. Marine leadership doctrine stated that "there comes a point in every close battle when each commander concludes that he is defeated."⁴⁷ Puller knew there would be times on the battlefield when only warrior-leadership and the courage of his men would turn the tide

of battle. His style also reflects what the *Armed Forces Officer* booklet mentions as the foundation of battlefield success: “. . . courage and risk taking. The leader who carries on, WINS!” The booklet further states in Proposition I that “when led with courage . . . an American will fight as willingly and as efficiently as any fighter in the world” These two doctrinal guidelines were imbedded in Puller’s style of leadership. During one of his many skirmishes at Guadalcanal, everyone had hit the ground at the onset of gunfire, but the Colonel remained standing, directing the return fire:

The Colonel stood there . . . with that little old stump of a pipe in his face, yelling, ‘B Company! Second platoon, in line here!’ Machine gun fire kicked up dust all around . . . as the machine guns opened fire, the Colonel fell to the ground, rolled over, and on his feet again, like a rubber man. He kept that up for several minutes: Hit the deck, roll. Stand and bellow orders, then down again spinning, knowing they would zero in on him while he was yelling orders.⁴⁸

Puller’s style was to take necessary risks in combat so that the unit might emulate his actions toward larger victories. It worked, but often at a huge human cost! While commanding the first Allied offensive at Guadalcanal, the gallantry of Puller’s men earned them *two Medals of Honor*, twenty-eight *Navy Crosses* and seventy-two *Silver Stars*.⁴⁹ Obviously, these performances were only partly the result of Puller’s tenacity on the battlefield, inspirational leadership and risk-taking example. Nevertheless, Chesty demonstrated battlefield leadership that fostered the courage to overcome fear, both individually and within the unit.

It has been said many times, that courage is not the absence of fear; rather, it is the strength to overcome fear,⁵⁰ however, Chesty’s fearless courage was extraordinary. There were times he demonstrated selflessness beyond that of a reasonable man. During

another Pacific Island battle, Colonel Puller was blown from his feet by a spray of flying metal; fragments had torn his legs and lower body and he was bleeding badly.

'Call headquarters, old man,' Puller said to his radioman.

'I can't, sir. The wire's been cut!' the radioman yelled.

Chesty struggled unsteadily to his feet and tried to help his repairman fix the wire. As he stood an enemy sniper shot him twice through the arm. He sank back to the ground . . . 'The old man's been hit bad,' said one of Puller's NCOs.

Major Sheppard bent over Puller, 'Are you able to command, sir?'

*'Of course I am.' said Puller, 'I can't leave these men.'*⁵¹

Bleeding and crippled, Colonel Puller remained in a foxhole, with a field phone calling in air strikes most of the night. The next morning, he refused to be moved until all of the battalion's killed and wounded had been picked up first. Puller believed that his men truly came first.

No model, however, is perfect. Puller's weaknesses included scoffing at new weapons systems and sticking to "Old Corps" tactics. He regretted the replacement of the Springfield rifle, and after observing a demonstration of the flame-thrower, which would later prove to be invaluable in clearing Japanese strong-points and pill boxes, he asked the demonstrator where the bayonet would be attached.⁵² Puller had no taste for elaborate ground-maneuvers schemes; head-on frontal attacks were his style. He once counseled a platoon leader that . . . there's mighty little room for fancy tactics below division level. The enemy are on the hill. You go get 'em." To many, Chesty was known as "hey-diddle-diddle, right-down-the-middle" Puller. Nevertheless, there were not many Marines that did not want Puller as their commander when the "real stuff started."⁵³ Frontal assaults, after all, were the preferred maneuver for the Marine Corps.

Puller's resistance to technological change and his style of coordinated fire and head-on maneuver, at least once, failed to attain combat success. Puller's way of

warfighting, and a situational miscalculation cost big at Peleliu. Marine Major General Roy S. Geiger, the Commander of the III Amphibious Corps, visited Colonel Puller at his command post. The General found Puller "unable to give a clear picture of what the situation was."⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Puller remained optimistic, and told Geiger that he required no additional help. In fact, Puller's regiment had been decimated to the point of having questionable combat effectiveness.⁵⁵

No man, Great Captain or Chesty Puller, makes the right decision, all of the time. Nor are the methods of one commander necessarily accepted by another. Many high ranking naval officers believed Puller was too harsh, flamboyant, and wasteful of his men.⁵⁶ Chesty reciprocated by despising top Navy brass, even though the 4th leadership principle of the *Vandergrift Doctrine* directs its Marines to "display absolute loyalty toward a superior, particularly when he is absent . . . [it is] not only morally correct, it is the only sure footing in any military organization." Although Puller knew Admiral Chester Nimitz personally after commanding the Marine detachment on board Nimitz' cruiser some years before,⁵⁷ he habitually referred to Admiral Nimitz as "NIM NITZ," a sign of his fundamental disrespect for men of his ilk.⁵⁸

Puller's suspicion of new technology, occasional tactical mistake (though costly), his simplistic frontal attack mentality, and errant attitude toward the naval hierarchy suggests leadership that defies doctrine. However, his proven combat record, career tenacity for excellence, and comments from superiors and subordinates suggests otherwise.

At the Inchon and Chosin Reservoir campaigns Chesty's aggressiveness as a tactical battlefield commander continued to provide a leadership paragon for those he

commanded. In 1950 he was fifty-two years old, and it had been thirty-one years since his baptism of fire in the jungles of Haiti. Nonetheless, he still knew what it took to inspire men forward, to go into harm's way. Preparing for the landing at Inchon he explained to his men that "most times Marines have to wait twenty-five years or more for a war . . . we get to get on with it now. Good luck. I'll see you ashore."⁵⁹ The "Puller Paragon" resonated throughout the theater. Just his presence on the Inchon beach inspired a company commander to yell to his halted amphibious tractor drivers, "If [Chesty] can, we can!"⁶⁰ They chugged ahead. Later in the campaign the effect he was having on the 1st Marine Division became more evident. An adjacent regimental battalion commander remarked that:

*[Puller] gave us pride in some way I can't describe. All of us had heard hundreds of stories about him, and today, though we couldn't see him doing great things, he kept building up our morale higher and higher, just by being there.*⁶¹

While in Korea, Puller's search for action during the battlefield lulls eventually took him to the air. His impatience with the enemy enticed him to fly with an observation plane, flying down valleys and around hills, spying on the Chinese. His missions were so daring and talked about so breathlessly by returning pilots he was awarded the *Air Medal* with two gold stars. His commander, General Oliver Smith, not only recommended Puller for this fifth *Navy Cross*, but commented on his fitness reports that Colonel Puller is an . . . aggressive officer who pursues his objectives without deviation. . . .[a] leader of men who inspires complete confidence from his subordinates."⁶²

His exploits as the 1st Marine Regimental Commander during the Korean War was lauded by General MacArthur more than once, culminating with a hand delivered

Silver Star for his gallant leadership on the battlefields leading to Seoul. A month later, in October, he was promoted to brigadier general. One observer from President Truman's White House, an Army major general, reported that "the Marine Corps was everything it claimed as a force in readiness. [Puller's] 1st Marine Division is the most efficient and courageous combat unit I have ever seen or heard of."⁶³

A descendant of Patrick Henry and a cousin of "Old Blood and Guts" Patton,⁶⁴ some say it was in Chesty Puller's blood. Perhaps, but Puller's vision and battlefield charisma were different. Patton commanded wonders at the operational level, while Puller focused on the tactical level, and he liked it that way. Even after thirty years in the corps, when he received word he had been promoted to brigadier general, he flew back to his regiment where his gunnery sergeant had planned a small unit party. His comments were brief but directed: "All the credit belongs to the [non-commissioned officers], junior officers, and enlisted men."⁶⁵

The Chosin Reservoir campaign proved to be another test of Puller's leadership. Through freezing conditions, extremely bad terrain, and poor morale resulting from a controversial UN mission he devotedly wandered among his Marines checking to ensure their rations, tents and confidence were being looked after, always pushing forward. It was during this campaign Puller's "rough and tough" training philosophy was validated.⁶⁶ Under terrible conditions and a seemingly impossible situation, Puller's 1st Marine Division advanced for thirteen days and thirty-five miles through tenacious Chinese resistance, out of the "Frozen Chosin," and into the final chapter of his career. Behind, on the barren hills and snow filled valleys, the Marines left the beaten and broken remnants of seven Chinese divisions. The 1st Marine Division chaplain described

Puller's regiment as convinced to the point of arrogance, that they were the most ferocious fighters on earth, and remarked that, "the last eight weeks have been the happiest and most content of my life."⁶⁷ Puller was awarded his fifth *Navy Cross* for actions during the campaign.

Puller was considered his era's model Marine warrior-leader. After his forced-retirement (for medical reasons), the magazine *Esquire* published a biting article, "Waste of an Old War Horse," deploring the retirement of the Corps' living legend.⁶⁸ Parallel feelings echoed within governmental communities just prior to his retirement.⁶⁹

Admiral Arleigh Burke: "The United States, the Marine Corps, and the Navy owe a great deal to you. You have exemplified over and over again in many battles those tenacious, hard hitting qualities which are so essential to any force."

Marine Commandant Lemuel C. Shepard: "[Chesty Puller] is a legends troop leader and professional soldier and will go down through the generations of Marines yet to be born."

US Senators John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts and Herbert H. Lehman of New York both referred to him as "the fighting symbol of the Marine Corps."

General Frank Lowe, the Army agent for President Truman in Korea commented on the proposal of Chesty's early retirement: "Forcing him to retire is a grave disservice to the Corps and country."

Perhaps, General Glen Otis, former Commander in Chief, US Army Forces in Europe, had men like Chesty in mind when he remarked that "each of us is led, some of us are leaders. The competence we demand in our leaders must be our model when we lead."⁷⁰ Like Alexander, Ney, and Patton, Puller was a battlefield leader that took risks and was willing to put his life on the line in order to excite his Marines toward mission success. Likewise, he understood that regardless of the battlefield lethality, it would be his leadership and composure that would ultimately trigger heroic-courage from his men.

Chesty Puller's old friend and former 1938 tactics classmate, General of the Army Omar Bradley alluded to this emotion of warrior-leadership during his battle command presentation to the Command and General Staff College class of 1967. He remarked that "leadership is intangible, and no weapon ever designed can replace it."⁷¹

As the smoke cleared in Puller's Marine career, he had risen to Major General (retired Lieutenant General) and become the most decorated Marine in the history of the Corps. Among his fifty-six decorations were five *Navy Crosses*, the *Army Distinguished service Cross*, the *Silver Star*, two *Legions of Merit*, the *Bronze Star*, two *Air Medals*, and three *Purple Hearts*.⁷² Ask any Marine, however, and he will tell you it was not medals that made him a warrior-leader; it was something more.

The "Puller Paragon" sowed its seeds in the "Old Corps," helped with innate and learned ability; combined with acquired wisdom through his experience and the experiences of others, and was substantiated by some of the Corps' most fierce war-fighting ever recorded. The "Puller Paragon," seemed a perfect fit on the beaches that tested the new amphibious doctrine. The key leadership traits Chesty discharged can be summarized as: (1) demanding relentless training and combat discipline, (2) inculcating loyalty and commitment among Marines, (3) exhibiting personal tenacity during training and combat, (4) setting a courageous example, and (5) speaking out, regardless of the personal consequences.

Chesty Puller retired on October 31, 1955. As a last show of admiration toward his subordinates, he asked his regimental Sergeant major help pin on his third star. His last comments recognized the men and junior officers, and only regretted not being

around for the next war. How could he know that he would help exemplify the Marine Corps ethos?

Puller's warrior-leadership today is remembered in a variety of ways. Samples of how he is remembered includes: (1) A US Navy Guided Missile Frigate FFG-23, Lewis B. Puller⁷³, (2) Modeled by the Marine Corps as the paradigm of tactical battlefield leadership in doctrinal manuals, and references to Marine leadership, and (3) at least 30 *World Wide Web* sites that contribute Chesty Puller information relating to his campaigns, leadership, and other ongoing Puller projects.⁷⁴

IV. CONTEMPORARY MARINE CORPS LEADERSHIP: DOGMA TO DOCTRINE

A perspective [Marine] Captain is told he has a ten-man working party, headed by a sergeant, and must erect a 75-foot flagpole. Problem — How to do it? Every Lieutenant who works out the precise calculations of stresses, tackle, and gear, no matter how accurately, is graded WRONG. The desired answer is simple: Turn to the Sergeant and say: "Sergeant, put up that flagpole."

— FMFM 1-0, *Leading Marines*

During a simpler time, the "Chesty Puller Paragon" helped characterize Marine leadership principles and traits. During 1942-52 the traditional American way of war was one of attrition, and generally worked because, with her allies, the United States enjoyed vast numerical and technological superiority. Warfighting doctrine, however has evolved into a more maneuver based, technology driven style of warmaking.⁷⁵ In addition, doctrine has had to keep watch on a guerrilla adversary and train for unconventional types of military operations.

Marine Corps leadership should have foreseen the changing ways of military operations. Evolving ways of war need a parallel doctrine (a common language) for

leading Marines onto contemporary battlefields, a mandate for technological competencies, and a more professional approach to war or peace making.⁷⁶ The Marine Corps' post Korean War trek toward dealing with change, however, was quite turbulent. Similar to the Army's Pentomic era, they experienced a period of organizational and cultural turbulence, tremendous technological advances, and a new focus on the connection between leadership and followership.⁷⁷

Certainly, the war in Southeast Asia was not a good time Marine leadership or forces employment. Marine leadership failed to find the calculus that would generate the "esprit de corps" and "discipline" of former times. Although Marines in combat proved gallant and brave, the Marine base camps and rear areas (havens for slackers and drug users) were carrying out a part in the 1969-71 phenomenon of attacking officers and NCOs, either by night ambushes or "fragging" episodes.⁷⁸ Part of the problem resulted because junior officers and non-commissioned officers were leading the battle, while senior tactical and operational warrior-leaders attempted to command while flying above the troops in helicopters, or otherwise out of harm's way. This was quite a contrast to Chesty Puller's experience in World War II and the Korean War.

S.L.A. Marshall in his analysis of the battlefield ethos wrote that warriors expect to see their warrior-leaders fighting and moving with them. He asserted that "... morale is impaired when [warriors] see their [warrior-leaders] shirking danger. The need that a commander be seen by his men in all of the circumstances of war may therefore be considered irreducible."⁷⁹ This was not necessarily the warrior-leadership method during Vietnam, and may have led to the cultural breakdown of the Corps.

Clearly, the Marine Corps endured periods of social-savagery during the Vietnam, and post Vietnam eras. Discipline was ragged and drug use was rampant. Jeffrey Record noted in the May 1995, *Proceedings*, (a magazine of the Navy's professional society) that during the Vietnam period violence and Marine-on-Marine crime escalated; and in some cases officers ventured out at night only in pairs.⁸⁰ It was not just officer versus enlisted (leader versus follower) that quarreled. In the racially unstable month of February 1970⁸¹, a group of black Marines unthinkably threw a grenade into a crowded enlisted club at Da Nang, killing one Marine and injuring sixty-two more.⁸² This was a far cry from the famed camaraderie Marines had always been known for.

Marine Commandant Leonard F. Chapman (1968-71) finally set into action policies that discharged about 15,000 Marines as administrative problems. At the same time, Chapman directed that there would be a new focus on strong leadership, from the ground up. The challenge he offered to his Corps of Marines was to inspire a new breed of Marines by (1) training [leadership] to perspective leaders, (2) stand behind their attempts to lead, (3) [stand back and] allow them to lead, and (4) convince them lead.⁸³ He started to bring to life what the *Guidebook for Marines* had noted for some time: "Every private in the Marine Corps is a potential squad leader."

An unpopular war, conscription issues, service parochialism, inadequate leadership; what ever label is attached to the failings during the Southeast Asian War, it would take almost twenty years of reworking the Corps' culture before the Marines could once again claim their core values had been mended. Interestingly, the role models and heroic-leaders continued to be Marines from the 1942-52 era.

Commandants through out the 70s and 80s made changes in recruiting policies, boot-camp training, and implemented strict “war on drugs” programs as part of a long road to their ethos recovery. It worked. By 1985 the Corps had reached a plateau of cultural excellence. The Marine Corps had drastically reduced its discipline problems, and reduced its drug problem to less than four percent of Marines testing positive in random urine analysis. Similarly, the Corps had attained longer enlistments, better educated recruits, and better training and educational incentives. When Commandant Alfred M. Gray Jr. (1987-91) remarked that that Marines are warriors, many Marines, resented the idea that there was any word more warrior-like than Marine.⁸⁴ Marines began to re-feel the traditional “esprit de corps”, and validated their fighting ethos during the 100-hour ground war of DESERT STORM.

The United States-led coalition war against Iraq involved more US Marines than any single operation in Marine Corps history.⁸⁵ However, in contrast to “the chevron war,” some have referred to the 1991 Persian Gulf War as the “stars war” (or the general’s war). This was a reference to the presence of general officers everywhere, caught up in everything. The Allied Central Command staff alone, accumulated 485 American officers, of which 83 were Marines. The Marine Corps averaged 20 general officers somewhere in the Kuwaiti theater during the last month of the war.⁸⁶

John W. Gardner, the author of *On Leadership*, writes that leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the warrior-leader or shared by the warrior-leader and his or her warriors.⁸⁷ Today, the Marine Corps develops leadership doctrine, educates all of its warriors with principles and traits of leadership, and watches for the spark that indicates

a future combat commander. Troops and followership had taken center stage. The Marine Corps' vision of warrior-leadership had evolved into being less concerned with rank, self-identity, recognition, or privilege. The emphasis had refocused on the essence of the Corps: the individual Marine as part of a greater whole; coupled with the unyielding determination to persevere because Marines do not fail.⁸⁸

According to the capstone service doctrine, *The Marine Corps Manual: Leadership*, the Commandant of the Marine Corps is directly responsible to the Secretary of the Navy for establishing and maintaining leadership standards and conducting leadership training within the Marine Corps. So, when Marine Commandant Carl E. Mundy (1991-93) instructed his Corps of Marines that doctrine will not be prescriptive because there is no formula for leadership, it carried significant impact.⁸⁹ Traditionally, Corps-education has taken many forms, often handed down from Marine to Marine, by word of mouth and by example. However, Commandant Mundy realized that both written and unwritten doctrine needed to guide the warrior-leaders of the Corps.

In the 1989 version of FMFM - , *Warfighting*, Commandant Gray writes to his Marines that he expects:

... every [Marine] officer to read - and reread - this book, understand it, and take its message to heart. The thoughts contained here represent not just guidance for actions in combat, but a way of thinking in general. ... doctrine establishes a particular way of thinking about war and a way of fighting, a philosophy for leading Marines in combat, a mandate for professionalism, and a common language."⁹⁰

Like former Commandants, General Krulak has also taken this doctrinal task seriously. In the 1997 revised version of *Warfighting*, MCDP - 1, changed the wording of Gray's "Forward", refocusing the Marine Corps warfighting ethos:

Experience has shown that the warfighting philosophy applies far beyond the officer corps. I expect all Marines — enlisted and commissioned — to read this book, understand it and act upon it (emphasis added).⁹¹

In the opinion of Commandant Krulak, the tougher task for today's Marine Corps warrior-leader is two-fold: (1) Inculcating within the Marine Corps ethos General Vandergrift's "Esprit de Corps", and "Discipline", and (2) Instilling a contemporary set of core values among a fast changing Corps of Marines. To this end, the contemporary model of the Marine warrior-leader seems to revolve around two challenges. The first is that of finding the best way to command a Corps of "The New Breed" Marines. The 1997 Marine Corps is composed of Nentindo-minded, space aided, mega-lethal warriors, that operate on land, in the air, from space, and from the sea. The second issue is how to transform civilian men and women into the joint-warrior culture necessary for the wartime mission of the United States Marine Corps. Clearly, in the opinion of the Commandant Krulak, warriors are the backbone of any effective combat organization, because without loyal, dedicated warriors there can be no effective warrior-leaders. As another Marine general put it, "Every Marine, from the Commandant down, is a follower."

Every Marine, asserts Commandant Krulak, has a basic responsibility to study the profession of arms on his own. As was the case in the era of Chesty Puller's Marines, a leader without either interest in, or knowledge of, the history and theory of warfare (the intellectual content of his profession) is a leader in appearance only. The new age Marine officer's principle weapon is his mind. The warrior ethos, however, is the basic challenge for the twenty-first century Marine Corps.

This new focus on the development of the warrior versus the warrior-leader is an interesting twist. The Marine Corps now works to develop loyal, committed, and courageous subordinate Marines rather than spending inordinate time on leadership development. It appears to be working.

FMFM 1-0, *Leading Marines* continues to espouse an expanded version of the leadership principles documented by the *Vandergrift Doctrine*. Marine leadership doctrine identifies fourteen leadership traits the Marine Corps expects from its leaders.⁹² Without a doubt, the biggest change is the re-emphasis on explaining Marine "esprit de corps," "discipline," and the continuing development of the Marine ethos. Similarly, the current version of the *Armed Forces Officer* offers an almost identical catalogue of combat leadership propositions. In fact, except for editorial updates and reference to security operations, the booklet is little changed with respect to officership and leadership. For the Marine Corps, however, the focus is adjusting to the "Transformation" of Marine-wannabes.

In General Krulak's November, 1996 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, "Transformation and Cohesion", he says up front that "Honor, Courage, Commitment" are the Marine core values. As Commandant Vandergrift directed in 1944, Commandant Krulak announced that these values are to be part of every Marine, and must inculcated within him or her self and demonstrated in their every action. These values are the bedrock of the contemporary Marine ethos. General Krulak's mandate is "Weave this ethos through the very fabric of your being and you earn the right to wear the title of "United States Marine." The "Transformation," an ongoing and dynamic process, begins

with a Marine-wannabe's first contact with a Marine recruiter, then continues through a Marine's entire career.

The sense that every Marine is a rifleman, demonstrated on the islands of Guadalcanal, Peleliu, the Chosin Reservoir, Khe Sanh and in a hundred other places, continues to be at the heart of the Marine ethos. This unspoken duty among Marines is more tradition than the cut of their uniform. Being a Marine rifleman establishes the reality of the possible danger and violence; the reality of killing and being killed. However, as S.L.A. Marshall noted “. . . one of the simple truths of war that the thing which enables an infantry soldier to keep going with his weapon, is the near presence or the presumed presence of a comrade.”⁹³ This feeling of unit cohesion has always been one of the Corps' primary goals. During recent periods of peace and unconventional military missions, though, creating camaraderie among Marines continues to be challenge.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, asserted that the validation of a soldier's mettle could only occur through the “touch of fire.” This “touch of fire”, or actual combat, is not always attainable. Consequently, the Marine Corps has made a bold new attempt at creating service cohesion and unit camaraderie with a boot-camp training event called “The Crucible,” or as General Krulak calls it, “the defining moment in a young Marine's life.” This is the second phase of the Transformation. In fifty-four hours of intense, physically demanding training, under conditions of sleep and food deprivation, recruits are forged in the furnace of shared hardship and tough training that has always been the trademark of Marine recruit training. Rather than emphasizing leadership, however, the Crucible focuses on teamwork and followership.

To endure The Crucible the recruits and their drill instructor must operate as a team. The Crucible is painful and relentless, but with an overarching theme: Teamwork! -- over, and over again -- teamwork and commitment to one's fellow Marine. At the end, a motivating video taped message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps is presented. Then, their drill instructor, in an emotionally charged ceremony, presents them their Marine Corps emblem (the "Eagle, Globe, and Anchor") and bestows upon them the right to claim membership in the brotherhood of the United States Marine Corps. Without a "touch of Fire," this is as close as they can get.

The third phase is a strengthening of the "cohesion" that binds Marines together. The "cohesion" phase is defined as the intense bonding of Marines, strengthened over time, resulting in absolute trust, subordination of self, and intuitive understanding of the collective actions of the unit, and the importance of teamwork. It begins when they are appointed a private or a second lieutenant, and continues until they leave the corps. Again, it is not warrior-leadership development that is emphasized. Rather, the focus is on warrior-leadership working to inculcate the essence of the Corps within all Marines.

The fourth and final phase of the Transformation is "sustainment." Sustainment is, also continuous, spans all they do as Marines throughout their career. Whether a squad leader, first sergeant, battalion commander, or force commander, a leader must embrace both the intangible and tangible elements of Marine philosophy. They are the guiding beliefs and principles that give the Marines their strength, influence their attitudes, and give the behavior they expect. They bond the family of Marines into a force able to overcome every challenge.

Today, the Corps believes they have reacquired that old feeling among Marines; a fierce loyalty to the Corps, believed to last long after their uniforms are in mothballs, “. . . woven through that sense of belonging, like a steel thread, they have, once more, an élitist spirit. . . . convinced that, being few in number, they are selective, better, and above all, different.”⁹⁴ Has Marine warrior-leadership, then, had to take on a different spin?

The 1997 Marine Corps has had to be much more versatile. Their service and joint mission must now deal with an evolution of new uses of force that are not quite war, not quite peace, not quite conventional military operations, and not quite civic police duties. Moreover, when the real modern battlefield arrives, killing and destruction will use advanced weapons systems that have the ability to think and pursue targets without much human manipulation. On the contemporary, technological battlefields Marine warriors direct fires, but unlike the battlefields in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam the hand-to-hand, charging over the parapet, or otherwise pursuing an attrition type Peleliu campaign is unlikely.

Is it practical for the Marine Corps to look into the past for what makes their warrior-leaders successful? Does the charismatic warrior-leader of the “Old Corps” have a role in Commandant Krulak’s Marine Corps? The answer begs the question: Are there any Marine heroic-leader examples from the last 45 years? No. The great warrior-leaders today are not the ones in the spotlight. Rather, they are the ones tending to the Marine ethos, mentoring their warriors, encouraging decentralized execution, then leading the applause of their subordinates success. Thus, the comparison: Is the 1942-52, “Chesty Puller Paragon” reasonable for the contemporary Marine warrior-leader?

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

*Shape, Respond, Prepare now: Only the most dedicated, well trained [warriors] with first class [warrior-leaders] will succeed in the complex and fast-paced environment of future [joint military] operations.*⁹⁵

— 1997 US National Military Strategy

The gap between “Old Corps” leadership and that of a leadership paragon for Commandant Krulak’s Marines are similar in aim, but different in focus and scope. Senior Marines continue to watch for innate and learned ability; attempt to provide methods for acquired wisdom through experience, and encourage their Marines to read and study experiences of others. Three key variables, however, are very different: (1) the unlikelihood of a warrior-leader’s mettle being validated by the throes of combat, (2) the technological integration of very complex systems in support of joint operations (not necessarily for war), and (4) decentralized tactical leadership. In the modern Corps of Marines, their character and ethos are different from that of the Chesty Puller era during 1942-52.

Technology, the American society, contemporary warfighting and peacekeeping cries for a different type Marine leadership model. The 1997 Marine warrior-leader must help institute the the Corps’ “Transformation,” become doctrinally proficient in evolving weaponry, understand Service jointness, and accept decentralized execution at much lower levels than ever before. Chesty Puller, a simple but resolute tactical warrior-leader, would have a difficult time adjusting to the requirements of today’s operational minded regimental commandership.

The new Marine Corps warrior-leader truly leads a world techno-force to be reckoned with. In response to the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait it only took six weeks for the Fleet Marine Force to place 45,000 Marines in theater.⁹⁶ Joined by Marine combat aircraft that flew directly to the Persian Gulf, the space-age Marines came equipped for air-ground mobile operations of which Erwin Rommel could only dream. Then when the Corps was called on during the "Mother of All Battles", in just six hours of fighting the I Marine Expeditionary Force; (1) cleared six major lanes through the Iraqi minefields, (2) penetrated the first defensive zone, (3) beat back one Iraqi counterattack, (4) fought their way into the second defensive zone, and (5) accepted the surrender of some 5,000 despondent Iraqis.⁹⁷ The cost of the battle was one Marine killed and about two dozen wounded. While Commandant Gray and the Marine field commander Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer disagreed on the frontal assault type attack, Marines in Desert Storm performed admirably. General Norman Schwarzkopf remarked that words like "brilliant" were an

*underdescription of the absolutely superb job in breaching the so called impenetrable barrier. . . . (The Marines) went through the first barrier like it was water. They went across into the second barrier line, even though they were under artillery fire. . . [an] absolutely superb operation, a textbook, and studied for many years to come as the way to do it.*⁹⁸

Clearly, through experience, advancing technology, and improved methods of education and training evolve differences in any military force. For the Marine Corps, former attrition style warfare, using a relatively new amphibious doctrine does not compare to contemporary technological, space aided, dominate maneuver warfare. Further, in former times battlefield information was distributed slowly, inaccurately, and often provided only dated information. This is in sharp contrast to today's three-

dimensional, real-time information system, that distributes data worldwide to whoever subscribes to the secure satellite network.

Especially noteworthy is the gap between the methods of preparing the Marine for combat. Training during 1942-52 consisted mainly of the rifle range, regimental size beach landing exercises and unit map preparation exercises. These techniques pale in comparison to the complexity of today's joint and combined task force training exercises, aided by space and computer based decision matrixes and virtual reality type scenarios.

Similarly the expectations of the combat leadership have changed. Decentralization of command has slowly followed the road of technology and a more capable force of Marines. A 1942-52 Marine regimental commander, is today what is expected of Marine commanders at the battalion and company levels. Comparing the "Chesty Puller Paragon" to today offers a better picture of the difference. Puller demanded relentless training and combat discipline, inculcated loyalty and commitment among his Marines, exhibited personal tenacity during training and combat, set a courageous example, and spoke out, regardless of the personal consequences. Though he did not agree with many technological advances or fancy tactics, he succeeded in the role needed by a World War II and Korean War Marine battlefield commander.

Naturally, Marine regimental level leadership has evolved also. The Corps now expects its battlefield warrior-leaders to be much more than they used to be. The Corps now expects their regimental commanders to; (1) become disciples of the Commandant and true believers in the focus on the holistic Marine ethos, (2) advocate the joint and combined mission, (3) be an active part of the civilian "Transformation" into a Marine

warrior, (4) act as sentries, on watch for Marines that exhibit leadership traits, (5) study and teach leadership principles and past warrior-heroes, and (6) inculcate Marine Corps core values espoused by doctrine and their Commandant.

After a forty-five year journey along a rocky road of cultural evolution, the Marine Corps has developed a leader-follower ethos that fits well with today's military mission, yet keeps with traditional values. The Corps has successfully become more techno-oriented, more lethal, better educated, doctrinally different and committed more than ever to esprit de corps. A major adjustment has been the focus on the holistic Corps, not on the individual or unit. The biggest difference, though, is the dispersed battlefield, and an awareness of the battlespace never before realized. Weapons today seek their targets by thinking, seeing, smelling, and hearing; with chilling accuracy. Further, it only takes a single Marine to inflict damage or death that would have taken a battalion or squadron in World War II or the Korean War to do.

If today's Marine Corps can create leadership paragons that reflect the need of the Corps, they will continue to be as successful as they were during Chesty's era. The gap, however, has grown to wide to continue using Lewis "Chesty" Puller as the contemporary leadership model. Ask a Marine to identify a warrior-hero, and he will most always look back to the "Old Corps." Similarly, if you ask a young Marine to give you the name of a past Great Captain, he (or she) is likely to mention (jokingly) Captain Kirk. If you explained the characteristics of a Great Captain, however, the likelihood of Chesty Puller being in their list is assured.

Chesty Puller was a one-of-a-kind warrior-leader for the Marines in the World War II Pacific and the Korean War. When he led his Marines onto a battlefield, and

hand-to-hand combat was the primary means of battle, his men acquired bonds that are difficult to understand today. Joint, push-button, dispersed technological military operations do not need a Chesty Puller to model tactical leadership. Like other battlefield commanders on former battlefields, they bring lessons to the present, but cannot role model contemporary leadership. Reflected in General Krulak's observations, and in recent changes to Marine Corps doctrine, leadership has to change with the mission, technology, and the culture of the followers. The Marine Corps warrior-leader model, then, must also change to reflect the needs of the contemporary warfighting ethos.

EPILOGUE

The spotlight roamed the audience as Generals were being named . . . more than 2,000 combat veterans and their wives were in the audience There were hums of voices and enthusiastic claps as the heroes of Tarawa, Wake Island and other battles were introduced . . . the master of ceremonies, General Julian Smith, blinked against the light. A hush fell on the crowded banquet hall as General Smith stated, 'and now I give you Chesty. . . .' A roar drowned the speaker's voice and shook the walls. General Smith shouted, 'I see you all know Chesty Puller!' Men danced on tables, whirled each other about, and pounded each other on the backs, tears streaming on their cheeks. The men began a chant 'WE WANT CHESTY!' . . . he (slowly) walked to the microphone and said just one word: 'MARINES!' . . . and Pandemonium broke out again.⁹⁹

—At a 1960 1st Marine Division reunion

This was a typical response when General Puller joined a Marine group, big or small. Chesty's combat leadership skills had saved many of their lives, and they knew it! Every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, and Marine can learn from the warrior-leader examples of the past. Alexander, Napoleon Patton and others leave a lasting images of combat leadership. Though Chesty Puller did not attain the right to be officially proclaimed a Great Captain, he displayed all the right attributes.

B.L. Reynolds, in his book *The Greatest of The Greatest*, thought that the Lewis B. Puller's rise through the ranks was held up only because "he lacked a college degree and was too much an enlisted Marine's Marine."¹⁰⁰ There may be some truth to this, but it did not affect Chesty's ability to draw the necessary warrior-spirit from his men. Clearly, during his time in the Corps succeeded. Puller knew how important it was to look-out for the well being of the troops and to respect the fearlessness of his Marines. Likewise, when his Marines needed purpose, direction, or motivation, they knew they could count on their warrior-leader, no matter what the personal danger. Surely, Puller's success as a tactical battlefield commander was unique for his time, as were those of Alexander,

Napoleon and Grant. Are there lessons from his style of leadership? Of course. Puller's "Old Corps" style of selfless courage, genuine concern for his men, and warrior spirit were just part of the reasons men like *Medal of Honor* winner and World War II Ace, Marine Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington made statements like, "He's the greatest Marine of them all."¹⁰¹

October 11, 1971, Lewis "Chesty" Burwell Puller passed away. At his funeral, Commandant General Leonard F. Chapman said, "... the example and legend of Chesty Puller are a part of the Corps forever."¹⁰² However, not just the Marine Corps recognizes him as a warrior-leader. In his son's book *Fortunate Son*, Lewis Puller, Jr., writes about his 1989 meeting with a group of Eastern Bloc soldiers: "After the meeting, a young Soviet soldier hurried over to introduce himself. In near perfect English, he explained he had studied General Chesty Puller in military school and felt it an honor to shake the hand of one of America's great military leaders."¹⁰³ Chesty's warrior-leadership and his combat success stories may not be the paragon of contemporary leadership, but have truly become part of World military history.

ENDNOTES

¹As quoted in Vince Lombardi's book, *Coaching For Teamwork* (Reinforcement Press, Bellevue, MA: 1997) p 50.

²J.F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander the Great* (Greenwood Press Publishers, Westport, CT: 1981), p 301.

³John Keegan, *Mask of Command* (Elisabeth Sifton Books, New York, NY: 1987), pp 213-216.

⁴Field Manual 22-100--*Military Leadership* (US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC: July 1990), p 54.

⁵Prior to World War II the Marine Corps leaders were clones of their senior leadership examples and emulated past heroic-leaders. Though many commanders studied the exploits of Civil War and World War I combat leaders, there was no official leadership doctrine.

⁶See Appendix A for a reprinted version of the 1944 publication.

⁷According to his biography, he enlisted on June 27, 1918 and was forced into retirement on October 31, 1955.

⁸Burke, p 163.

⁹Anthony Kellett, *Combat Motivation* (Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing, Boston, MA: 1982), pp 41-42.

¹⁰By the "Old Corps" I mean the Marine Corps before World War II, reared in the period during World War I and the small wars between the world Wars.

¹¹Moskin, p. 346.

¹²This assertion is written in various Marine doctrinal publications and included in General Krulak's 1996 statement to Marines.

¹³As quoted in *Patton: A Genius For War*, by Carlo D'Este (Haper-Collins Publishers, New York, NY: 1996), 813.

¹⁴Michael Howard, *Clausewitz* (Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, New York, NY: 1993), 27.

¹⁵*Leading Marines*, 97.

¹⁶The Commandant between 1948-52, he was quoted in the US Department of Defense's, *The Armed Forces Officer* (Government Printing Office, Washington, DC: 1950).

¹⁷FM 22-100, 11.

¹⁸Marine Officer's Guide, 367.

¹⁹FM 22-100, 9.

²⁰As taken from *The Marine Officer's Guide* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD: 1977), 360.

²¹John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (Penguin Books, New York, NY: 1984), 27.

²²Julius C. Caesar, *The Gaelic War* (London, England: 1946).

²³Davis, 123.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 357.

²⁵A brilliant discussion is outlined in this renowned Marine Corps biography. Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of The United States Marine Corps* (The Free Press, New York, NY: 1991, 344-387).

²⁶Millett, Appendix 2, 654.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 361.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 330-343.

²⁹World War II Marine Corps Manual, *Battle Doctrine For Front Line Marines* (US Marine Corps Doctrine Center, Quantico, VA: 1944).

³⁰Howard, 141.

³¹From Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary webpage://www.webster's.com, reference: web1913.

³²*Ibid.*

³³Keegan, *Mask of Command*, 311-338.

³⁴ In addition to topics of military leadership, the US Department of Defense's, *The Armed Forces Officer* (Government Printing Office, Washington, DC: 1950) covers topics that include military ideals, customs and courtesies, writing and speaking, counseling techniques, and using reward and punishment.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 94 - 96.

³⁶ US Army FM 22-100--*Military Leadership* (US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC: July 1990), 9.

³⁷ *The Marine Book* by Chuck Lawliss gives a full account of the history of the Marine Corps. Colonel Griffith's work is paraphrased from 46-47.

³⁸ As quoted in the *Air Force Times*, September 29, 1997, 25.

³⁹ Davis, 393.

⁴⁰ According to Raymond Horricks' book, *Marshal Ney: The Romance is Real*, (Hippocrene Books Inc., New York, NY: 1982, Napoleon gave Ney the title "Bravest of the Brave."

⁴¹ Karl Schuon, *US Marine Corps' Biographical Dictionary* (Franklin Watts Inc., New York NY: 1963), 176.

⁴² Chapter one of Puller's biography, *Marine!*, describes his interest and pursuit of military history.

⁴³ Maurice de Saxe, *My Reveries on the Art of Command*, in the *Roots of Strategy*, Vol. 1 (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1987), 186-223.

⁴⁴ Fuller, 281.

⁴⁵ *Battle Doctrine For Front line Leaders*, 41st principle.

⁴⁶ Davis, 394.

⁴⁷ *Battle Doctrine For Front line Leaders*, 36th principle.

⁴⁸ Davis, 132.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁵⁰ S.L.A. Marshal, *Men Against Fire* (William Morrow and Co.: 1961), provides excellent insight to the reactions of leaders in combat.

⁵¹ Davis, 166.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 203.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵⁴ Harry Gailey, *Peleliu 1944* (The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, Annapolis, MD: 1983), 58.

⁵⁵ According to Robert Debs Heinl, *Soldiers of The Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, Annapolis, MD: 1991 p. 469, Fifty-six percent of Puller's regiment (1,749) were killed or wounded. In his 1st Battalion, of the nine rifle platoons in three companies, none of the original platoon leaders remained.

⁵⁶ Privately, Naval officers were critical about Chesty Puller. However, publicly, they most always praised his exploits.

⁵⁷ Roger . Spiller, *Dictionary American Military Biography* (Greenwood Press, Westport, CT: 1984), 888-89.

⁵⁸ Bill D. Ross, *Peleliu: Tragic Triumph* (Random House, New York, NY: 1991) 46.

⁵⁹ Davis, 252.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 330.

⁶³ Millett, 491-492.

⁶⁴ Davis, 11-12.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 345

⁶⁶ John A. English, *On Infantry* (CBS Educational and Professional Publishing, New York, NY: 1981), 174.

⁶⁷ Davis, 323.

⁶⁸ *Esquire Magazine*, November, 1955, feature article.

⁶⁹ These comments are noted in Davis' book on pages 367-370 only as samples.

⁷⁰ *Military Leadership*, 114.

⁷¹Robert L. Taylor and William E. Rosenbach, *Military Leadership* (2nd edition, Westview Press, Oxford, England: 1992), 1.

⁷²Burke Davis, *Marine!*, (Little Brown and Company, Boston, MA: 1962), 394.

⁷³The USS Lewis B. Puller is the 17th ship of the *Oliver Hazard Perry* class of "guided missile frigate," commissioned on 17 April, 1982.

⁷⁴For a listing of Chesty Puller information and web-sites, try <www.yahoo.com>, then search "Chesty Puller."

⁷⁵Maneuver warfare came into the Corps over 17 years ago by General Alfred. M. Gray and Colonel J. B. Boyd, USAF (Ret.). It took root in the 2nd Marine Division in 1981, appearing first as a maneuver warfare board made up of true believers. Their unpublished works, "Gray's Battlebook," and Boyd's Patterns of Conflict", accompanied by numerous articles in the Marine Gazette. Now FMFM 1, *Warfighting*, and FMFM 1-1, *Campaigning*, have codified maneuver warfare and operational art philosophy for the Marine Corps, and resulted in campaign doctrine.

⁷⁶*The Theory of War*, 43.

⁷⁷The term "Pentomic Era" refers to the changes that occurred within the US Army between the Korean and Vietnam wars. An excellent reference is A.J. Bacevich's *The Pentomic Era* (National Defense University Press, Washington, DC: 1986).

⁷⁸Millett, 602.

⁷⁹S.L.A. Marshall, 105 & 187.

⁸⁰Jeffrey Record, in an article of the May 1995, *Proceedings*, as used in another article by Thomas E. Ricks, "The Widening Gap Between the Military and Society," *The Atlantic Monthly* July 1997.

⁸¹According to Millett's book, there were 1,060 violent Marine racial incidents in 1970 alone.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 599.

⁸³Marine Commandant Robert E. Cushman, *Marine Corps Gazette*, "The Challenge of Leadership (A message from the Comandant)", August 1972. 15.

⁸⁴Moskin, 820.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 769.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 776.

⁸⁷J.W. Gardner, *On Leadership* (The Free Press, New York, NY: 1990), 1.

⁸⁸*Leadership*, 25.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, the forward.

⁹⁰*Warfighting*, the Forward

⁹¹Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, *Warfighting* (US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC: 1997), the "Forward."

⁹²FMFM1 gives their Leadership Traits as: Integrity - Knowledge - Courage - Decisiveness - Dependability - Initiative - Tact - Judgment - Loyalty - Unselfishness - Endurance - Bearing - Enthusiasm - & Justice. Their Leadership Principles are: Set the example - Make sound decisions - Keep your Marines informed - Train your Marines as a team - Be technically and tactically proficient - Know yourself and seek self-improvement - Employ your unit in accordance with its capabilities - Know your Marines and look out for their well welfare - Develop a sense of responsibility among your actions - Ensure the Task is understood, supervised, and accomplished.

⁹³Marshall, 42.

⁹⁴Victor H. Krulak, Lieutenant General, USMC (Retired), *First to Fight: An Inside View of the US Marine Corps* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD: 1984), 155.

⁹⁵National Military Strategy of the United States of America, *Shape, Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy For a New Era* (US Printing Office, Washington, DC: 1997) 27.

⁹⁶This section is supported by Millett's discussion, "The Once and Future Corps in the 1990s," Chapter 20; and Micheal Gordon and Bernard Trainor's *The General's War*. Little Brown and Company: Boston, MA, 1995, Chapter 8.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

⁹⁸Quoted in Millett, 639.

⁹⁹Davis, 391.

¹⁰⁰B. Reynolds, *The Greatest of The Greatest* (Vantage Press, New York, NY: 1983), 1.

¹⁰¹Davis, 97.

¹⁰²*Marine Corps Gazette*, Nov 1971.

¹⁰³Puller, Lewis Jr. *Fortunate Son* (Grove Weidenfield Publishers, New York, NY: 1991) 373.

APPENDIX A

[Marine] Battle Doctrine For Front Line Leaders

Foreword

This forceful restatement of the fundamental principles of troop leadership, supplemented by rules based on combat experience in the Solomon Islands Area was prepared by the Third Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. It is worthy of careful study by every Marine who is or may be charged with the leadership of other Marines in battle.

(Signed) Alexander A. Vandergrift
Commandants of the Marine Corps

Introduction

The Senior Commander of a force plans the battle in its broader sense and is responsible for ultimate success or failure. However, once a subordinate unit has been committed to action, he must, for the time being, limit his activities to providing the necessary support and insuring the coordination of all components. Regardless of how well conceived the Senior Commander's plan may be, it can be nullified if his front line platoons are incapable of carrying out the mission assigned.

The conduct of the front line rests with company commanders, and their platoon and squad leaders. The front line leader must plan and execute his battle. He must know his enemy, his own men, and must aggressively employ all of his weapons in coordinated fire and movement. He must personally lead his unit to success. The paramount importance of front line leadership cannot be overestimated.

1. The prime factor in a successful fighting unit is ESPRIT DE CORPS. This needs no further explanation. It simply means that no Marine ever lets another Marine down. The expression, "A squad of Marines," has for over a hundred years been synonymous with such other expressions as "coiled rattlesnake", "concentrated dynamite," "powder keg," etc. Its meaning has been well earned.
2. Of almost equal importance to a fighting unit is DISCIPLINE. This applies to all activities at all times. It must never be relaxed, particularly during times of hardship, discomfort, or danger. It spells the difference between a "mob" and a unit". Discipline is obtained mainly through diligence of the leader in insisting that things be done "right", and added by the judicious daily application of rewards and punishments. Justice, consistency, firmness, and respect are the roots of discipline. Men like to serve in a well-disciplined unit. Mob methods disgust them.
3. Be neat in your person; habitually wear your insignia of rank on all uniforms and have all your subordinates do the same. Insignia may be dulled or blended just before entering close combat - but not before.
4. Exercise and display absolute loyalty toward a superior, particularly when he is absent. This is not only morally correct, it is the only sure footing in any military organization. It also enhances your personal prestige among your subordinates.
5. Refrain from "blowing up" under stress or when irritated.
6. Always show enthusiasm - it is infectious.
7. Never allow yourself to be unduly rushed or stampeded. There is usually ample time for considered judgment, even during battle. Dignity and poise are invaluable assets to a leader.
8. In the field, practice the habit of making daily inspections (using the "sample" method) and insist on: (1) clean weapons, (2) presence of arms, (3) care of the feet, (4) alertness while on watch. See that rewards and punishments are promptly awarded.
9. At the front, visit all of your men frequently - talk to them - be sure they know what you want them to do at all times, and where you can be found.

10. Do not get your unit lost - nothing destroys confidence quicker.
11. As a general rule do not call for volunteers to do a dangerous or distasteful job. Pick out the individuals yourself and assign them to do the job clearly, and in the presence of others.
12. Give your orders positively and clearly at all times. Avoid vagueness.
13. Never allow cruelty, it undermines the natural courage and manliness of the perpetrator. Be respectful to the dead - even the enemy dead. Bury the dead quickly.
14. Be prompt and accurate in making reports. Send back information at least once each hour during action. The commanding officer can't help you unless he knows your situation.
15. If anything goes wrong, do not be too quick to blame our artillery, aviation, engineers, supply services, or any other organization. They can be depended upon always to do all they can with the information and means at hand. They, too, have a job which requires courage and determination, and they are doing their best to back you up.
16. Take active charge of all activities on the front which lie within your sphere of responsibility.
17. A front-line Marine demands little from his leader, namely: (1) a clear conception of what he is expected to do, (2) ammunition, (3) drinking water, (4) rations, (5) medical service, and eventually (6) cigarettes and mail. These items must be your continuous concern.
18. Always arrange for the comfort of your men before you do your own.
19. Maintain your leadership. Nothing is more humiliating to a normal leader than to see his men naturally turning to a subordinate for direction in times of danger.
20. Arrange continuously for your men to get as much rest as the situation will allow. Avoid unnecessary harassment, such as "standing by." Unless your unit is on the move, or unless you or the enemy are actually attacking, you can usually arrange for at least two-thirds of your men to sleep at night.
21. Do not tolerate any evidence of self-pity in your men. It makes any difficult situation worse.
22. Keep to yourself alone any concern you may have as to your general situation, and do not let it be reflected in your countenance or actions. Remember that all situations look critical at times.
23. Encourage common decency - do not tolerate vulgarity or filthy language in your presence.
24. Insist on carrying out all rules for field sanitation, even in the front lines.
25. Do not encourage rumors - they are usually disturbing - most of them are entirely without foundation. Find out for yourself and be the first to tell your men the truth.
26. Win a reputation for moving your outfit promptly. Depart and arrive on time.
27. Be "time and space" conscious. By practicing, know the average time it takes: (1) to issue your orders, (2) to assemble your unit, (3) to move it a hundred yards over varied types of terrain, (4) to deploy it for battle. Always have your watch set at correct time.

28. Keep your men informed as to the enemy situation and your plans. Devise and execute plans for taking prisoners.
29. Offensive tactics, briefly summarized, may be stated as follows: Hold the attention of your enemy with a minimum force, then quickly strike him suddenly and hard on his flank or rear with every weapon you have, then rush him when his fire slackens. Any plan that accomplishes this will usually win if it is driven home quickly. Be slow to change a plan - the reason for the change should be obvious.
30. Remember that supporting arms seldom destroy - they paralyze temporarily. Take quick advantage of their support before the enemy "comes to." Act suddenly.
31. In a surprise meeting of small forces, hit the enemy immediately while he is still startled; don't let him get set, be persistent, and "keep him rolling."
32. Be prepared always. Anticipate your action in case of an emergency. Ask yourself what you would do immediately in case the enemy should appear. If you have to hesitate in your answer, you are not sufficiently prepared. Keep thinking, and at all time be one jump ahead of the immediate situation.
33. Never permit men to remain inactive under machine gun fire. Give orders quickly.
34. Do not permit the slightest rearward movement of any individual while under heavy fire, except to get wounded out, or when openly directed by you. It is usually best to go forward, or dig in until the fire ceases.
35. Always endeavor to confront your enemy with a superior volume of accurate fire. This may be accomplished at any given point by means of maneuver and coordination of the fire of all weapons. Use every weapon you have - they are all especially effective if used together.
36. A great and successful troop leader said that there comes a point in every close battle when each commander concludes that he is defeated. The leader who carries on, wins.
37. It has been recently observed that an enemy often slackens or ceases his fire right at the time he appears to be getting the upper hand. He then simply crouches in his hole. This means that he cannot sustain a fire fight. Stick to your plan and hit him harder.
38. Positions are seldom lost because they have been destroyed, but almost invariably because the leader has decided in his own mind that the position cannot be held.
39. Beware of daylight withdrawals. They may appear logical in a classroom but they are always dangerous in practice. In a tight spot hold on, at least until nightfall.
40. Nothing on this Earth is so uplifting to a human being as victory in battle; nothing so degrading as defeat.
41. "Battles are won during the training period"

APPENDIX B

The (1950) Armed Forces Officer Propositions

[All emphasis in the original]

- I. When led with courage and intelligence, an American will fight as willingly and as efficiently as any fighter in world history.
- II. His keenness and endurance in war will be in proportion to the zeal and inspiration of his leadership.
- III. He is resourceful and imaginative; the best results will always flow from encouraging him to use his brain along with his spirit.
- IV. Under combat conditions he will reserve his greatest loyalty for the officer who is most resourceful in the tactical employment of his forces and most careful to avoid unnecessary losses.
- V. He is to a certain extent machine-bound because the nature of our civilization has made him so. In an emergency, he tends to look around for a motor car, a radio or some other gadget that will facilitate his purpose, instead of thinking about using his muscle power toward the given end. In combat, this is a weakness which thwarts contact and limits communications. Therefore it needs to be anticipated and guarded against.
- VI. War does not require that the American be brutalized or bullied in any measure whatever. His need is an alert mind and a toughened body. Hate and bloodlust are not the attributes of a sound training under the American system. To develop clearly a line of duty is sufficient to point Americans toward the doing of it.
- VII. Except on a Hollywood lot, there is no such thing as an American fighter "type." Our best men come in all colors, shapes, and sizes. They appear from every section of the Nation, including the territories.
- VIII. Presupposing soundness in their officer leadership, the majority of Americans in any group or unit can be depended upon to fight loyally and obediently, and will give a good account of themselves.
- IX. In battle, Americans do not tend to fluctuate between emotional extremes, in complete dejection one day and in exultation the next, according to changes in the situation. They continue on a fairly even keel, when the going is tough and when things are breaking their way. Even when heavily shocked by battle losses, they tend to bound back quickly. Though their griping is incessant, their natural outlook is optimistic, and they react unfavorably to the officer who looks eternally on the dark side.
- X. During battle, American officers are not expected either to drive their men or to be forever in the van, as if praying to be shot. So long as they are with their men, taking the same chances as their men, and showing a firm grasp of the situation and of the line of action which should be followed, the men will go forward.
- XI. In any situation of extreme pressure, or moral exhaustion, where men cannot otherwise be rallied and led forward, officers are expected to do the actual physical act of leading, such as performing as first scout, or point, even though this means taking over what normally would be an enlisted man's function.
- XII. The normal, gregarious American is not at his best when playing a lone-handed or tactically isolated part in battle. He is not a kamikaze or a one-man torpedo. Consequently, the best tactical results obtain from those dispositions and methods which link the power of one man to that of another. Men who feel strange with their unit, having been carelessly received by it, and indifferently handled, will rarely, if ever, fight strongly and courageously. But if treated with common decency and respect, they will perform like men.

XIII. Within our school of military thought, higher authority does not consider itself infallible. Either in combat or out, in any situation where a majority of militarily-trained Americans become undutiful, that is sufficient reason for higher authority to re-survey its own judgments, disciplines and line of action.

XIV. To lie to American troops to cover up a blunder in combat, rarely serves any valid purpose. They have a good sense of combat and an uncanny instinct for ferreting out the truth when anything goes wrong tactically. They will excuse mistakes but they will not forgive being treated like children.

XV. When spit-and-polish are laid on so heavily that they become onerous, and the ranks cannot see any legitimate connection between the requirements and the development of an attitude which will serve a clear fighting purpose, it is to be questioned that the exactions serve any good object whatever.

XVI. On the other hand, because standards of discipline and courtesy are designed for the express purpose of furthering control under the extraordinary frictions and pressures of the battlefield, their maintenance under combat conditions is as necessary as during training. Smartness and respect are the marks of military alertness, no matter how trying the circumstances. But courtesy starts at the top, in the dealing of any officer with his subordinates, and in his decent regard for their loyalty, intelligence, and manhood.

XVII. Though Americans enjoy relatively a bountiful, and even luxurious standard of living in their home environment, they do not have to be pampered, spoon-fed and surfeited with every comfort and convenience to keep them steadfast and devoted, once war comes. They are by nature rugged men, and in the field will respond most perfectly when called on to play a rugged part. Soft handling will soften even the best men. But even the weak man will develop a new vigor and confidence in the face of necessary hardship, if moved by a leadership which is courageously making the best of a bad situation.

XVIII. Extravagance and wastefulness is somewhat rooted in the American character, because of our mode of life. When our men enter military service, there is a strong holdover of their prodigal civilian habits. Even under fighting conditions, they tend to be wasteful of drinking water, food, munitionment and other vital supply. When such things are made *too* accessible, they tend to throw them away, rather than to conserve them in the general interests. This is a distinct weakness during combat, when conservation of all supply is the touchstone of success. The regulating of all supply, and the preventing of waste in any form, is the prime obligation of every officer.

XIX. Under the conditions of battle, any extra work, exercise, maneuver or *marching which does not serve a clear and direct operational purpose* is unjustifiable. The supreme object is to keep men as physically fresh and mentally alert as possible. Tired men take fright and are half-whipped before the battle opens. Worn-out officers cannot make clear decisions. The conservation of men's powers, not the exhaustion thereof, is the way of successful operation.

XX. When forces are committed to combat, it is vital that not one unnecessary pound be put on any man's back. Lightness of foot is the key to speed of movement and the increase of fire-power. In judging of these things, every officer's thought should be on the optimistic side. It is better to take the chance that men will manage to get by on a little less than to overload them, through an overcautious reckoning of every possible contingency, thereby destroying their power to do anything effectively.

XXI. Even a thorough training and long practice in weapons handling will not always insure that a majority of men will use their weapons freely and consistently when engaging the enemy. This is particularly true of Americans. In youth they are taught that the taking of human life is wrong. This feeling is deep-rooted in their emotions. Many of them cannot shake it off when the hour comes that their own lives are in danger. They fail to fire, though they do not know exactly why. In war, firing at an enemy target can be made a habit. Once required to make the start, because he is given personal and intelligent direction, any man will find it easier to fire the second and third time, and soon thereafter his response will become automatic in any tactical situation. When engaging the enemy, the most decisive task of all junior leaders is to make certain that *all* men along the line are employing their

weapons, even if this means spending some time with each man and directing his fire. Reconnaissance and inspection toward this end, particularly in the early stages of initial engagement, are far more important than the employment of weapons by junior leaders themselves, since this latter tends to distract their attention from what the men are doing.

XXII. Unity of action develops from fullness of information. In combat, all ranks have to know what is being done, and why it is being done, if confusion is to be kept to a minimum. This holds true in all types of operation, whatever the service. However, a surfeit of information clouds the mind and may sometimes depress the spirit. We can take one example. A commander might be confronted by a complex situation, and his solution may comprise a continuing operation in three distinct phases. It would be advisable that all hands be told the complete detail of "phase A." But it might be equally sensible that only his subordinates who are closest to him be made fully informed about "phase B," and "phase C." All plans in combat are subject to modification as circumstances dictate; this being the case, it is better not to muddle men by filling their minds with a seeming conflict in ideas. More important still, if the grand object seems too vast and formidable, even the first step toward it may appear doubly difficult. Fullness of information does not void the other principle that one thing at a time, carefully organized all down the line, is the surest way.

XXIII. There is no excuse for malingering or cowardice during battle. It is the task of leadership to stop it, by whatever means would seem to be the surest cure, always making certain that in so doing it will not make a bad matter worse.

XXIV. The Armed Services recognize that there are occasional individuals whose nervous and spiritual makeup may be such that, though they erode rapidly and may suffer complete breakdown under combat conditions, they still may be wholly loyal and conscientious men, capable of doing high duty elsewhere. Men are not alike. In some, however willing the spirit, the flesh may still be weak. To punish, degrade or in any way humiliate such men is not more cruel than ignorant. When the good faith of any individual has been repeatedly demonstrated in his earlier service, he deserves the benefit of the doubt from his superior, pending study of his case by medical authority. But if the man has been a bad actor consistently, his officer is warranted in proceeding on the assumption that his combat failure is just one more grave moral dereliction. To fail to take proper action against such a man can only work unusual hardship on the majority trying to do duty.

XXV. The United States abides by the laws of war. Its armed forces, in their dealing with all other peoples, are expected to comply with the laws of war, in the spirit and to the letter. In waging war, we do not terrorize helpless non-combatants, if it is within our power to avoid so doing. Wanton killing, torture, cruelty or the working of unusual and unnecessary hardship on enemy prisoners or populations is not justified in any circumstance. Likewise, respect for the reign of law, as *that term is understood in the United States*) is expected to follow the flag wherever it goes. Pillaging, looting and other excesses are as unmoral where Americans are operating under military law as when they are living together under the civil code. None the less, some men in the American services will loot and destroy property, unless they are restrained by fear of punishment. War looses violence and disorder; it inflames passions and makes it relatively easy for the individual to get away with unlawful actions. But it does not lessen the gravity of his offense or make it less necessary that constituted authority put him down. The main safeguard against lawlessness and hooliganism in any armed body is the integrity of its officers. When men know that their commander is absolutely opposed to such excesses, and will take forceful action to repress any breach of discipline, they will conform. But when an officer winks at any depredation by his men, it is no different than if he had committed the act.

XXVI. On the field of sport Americans always "talk it up" to keep nerves steady and to generate confidence. The need is even greater on the field of war, and the same treatment will have no less effect. When men are afraid, they go silent; silence of itself further intensifies their fear. The resumption of speech is the beginning of thoughtful, collected action, for self-evidently, two or more men cannot join strength and work intelligently together until they know one another's thoughts. *Consequently, all training is an exercise in getting men to open up and become articulate even as it is a process in conditioning them physically to move strongly and together.*

XXVII. Inspection is more important in the face of the enemy than during training because a fouled piece may mean a lost battle, an overlooked sick man may infect a fortress and a mislaid message can cost a war. In virtue of his position, every junior leader is an inspector, and the obligation to make certain that his force at all times is inspection proof is unremitting.

XXVIII. In battle crisis, a majority of Americans present will respond to any man who has the will and the brains to give them a clear, intelligent order. They will follow the lowest-ranking man present if he obviously knows what he is doing and is morally the master of the situation, but they will not obey a chuckle-head if he has nothing in his favor but his rank.

XXIX. In any action in which the several services are joined, any American officer may expect the same measure of respect from the ranks of any other service as from his own, provided he conducts himself with a dignity and manner becoming an American officer.

[In closing] For all officers, due reflection on these points, relating to the character of our men in war, is not more important than a continuing study of how they may be applied to all aspects of training, toward the end that we may further strengthen our own system. This is the grand object in all military studies. That service is most perfect which best holds itself, at all times and at all levels, in a state of readiness to move against and destroy any declared enemy of the [1950] United States.

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